



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

3D MARINE DIVISION (-) (REIN), FMF
UNIT 35801
FPO AP 96602-5801

DivO 1560.4B
G-3T
7 Nov 94

DIVISION ORDER 1560.4B

From: Commanding General
To: Distribution List

Subj: PROFESSIONAL READING PROGRAM

Ref: (a) MCO P1560.4
(b) ALMAR 127/89
(c) DivO P1500.25A

Encl: (1) Guidelines for Book Review Contest
(2) Book Review Content and Format
(3) Sample Book Review
(4) Evaluation Sheet

1. Purpose. To implement the Professional Reading Program in the 3d Marine Division.

2. Cancellation. DivO 1560.4A

3 Background

a. Per reference (a), the Professional Reading Program is part of the overall Professional Military Education (PME) in the Marine Corps.

b. Reference (b), officially established the Professional Reading Program and directed that it be incorporated into the existing PME program of every command/unit.

c. Reference (c), is the 3d Marine Division Training Standing Operating Procedures (SOP). It prescribes the PME program for the 3d Marine Division, including the Division Professional Reading Program.

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4. Information

a. The list of books contained in reference (b), and annual updates thereto, is to be used as the selection list for the 3d Marine Division Professional Reading Program.

b. As part of the 3d Marine Division's implementation of the Professional Reading Program, a Semi-Annual Book Review Contest will be held. The contest guidelines are contained in enclosure (1).

c. Enclosure (2) outlines the book review content and format; enclosure (3) is a sample book review; and enclosure (4) will be used by the Book Review Contest Board to evaluate the contestants' written material.

5 Action

a Organizational Commanders

(1) Implement the Professional Reading Program as part of PME per references (a) through (c).

(2) Participate in the Division Book Review Contest per this Order.

b. Assistant Chiefs of Staff. Provide membership to the Book Review Contest Board.

c. Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1

(1) Provide administrative support to the senior member of the Book Review Contest Board.

(2) Coordinate with the Public Affairs Officer for coverage of the Book Review Contest winners and award presentations.

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d. Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3. Exercise primary cognizance over the implementation and conduct of the Professional Reading Program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. G. Ford", with a stylized flourish at the end.

W. G. FORD
Chief of Staff

Distribution: A/D

GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEW CONTEST

The book review contest will be held semi-annually

2. Formal book reviews will be forwarded via the chain of command to the Commanding General (Attn: G-3T) to arrive no later than 31 January and 31 July each year.
3. Book reviews will follow the format in enclosure (2)
4. Each regiment and separate battalion will submit one SNCO and one NCO book review. Additional reviews may be submitted.
5. A book review board will convene during the first week in February and August in order to judge the reviews. The board will consist of (as a minimum):
 - a. Division Training Officer (senior board member)
 - b. Division Sergeant Major
 - c. Two Field Grade Division Staff Officers
 - d. Two Company Grade Division Staff Officers
 - e. One Warrant Officer, Division Staff
6. The review board will meet to discuss the book reviews and select the winners.
7. Winners will be announced by the 15th of the following month, and receive the following (as a minimum):
 - a. Framed Certificate of Commendation signed and personally presented by the Commanding General.
 - b. A 96 hour special liberty authorization

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BOOK REVIEW CONTENT AND FORMAT

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Organizational Name
Geographical Location and Zip Code

1560
WHB [init]
DD Mmm YY

From: [Marine submitting review]
To: Senior Member, Division Book Review Board
Via: [Chain of Command]

BOOK REVIEW OF (TITLE OF THE BOOK [Underlined])

(a) [Give the full title of the book and the author's full name]

1 Recommendations

a. Audience. State who should read this book and why.

b. Actions. State what actions you recommend that Marine leaders, units, Marines, or civilians take as a result of the lessons learned in this book. Briefly state your reasons for the recommendations.

2 Analysis of the Content

a. Thesis. Identify the central, controlling idea of the book (This subparagraph is essential).

b. Synopsis. Write a one-paragraph summary of what happens in the book to develop or support the thesis. Keep it to 75 words.

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c. Key Characters (or Key Concepts). Identify at least three key personalities in the text and state why they are important. If there are no characters in the text, cite key concepts. Use a subparagraph for each and link them to the thesis.

d. Key passages. Identify three important passages and explain their significance. Use a subparagraph for each.

3 Analysis of the Quality of the Book

a. Applicability. Identify the author's intended readers. Analyze how well the author met their needs. Also, state how applicable the text is to the Marine Corps, today.

b. Timeliness. State whether the book is outdated or relevant and explain why.

c. Completeness. State how completely the book treats the topic. Indicate whether there is adequate support for the author's thesis and main points.

d. Style. Judge the author's writing style. Analyze the clarity, conciseness, coherence, correctness, precision of language, logic, tone, and readability of the text.

4. Lessons Learned. Discuss in detail at least three major lessons you learned from reading this book. Explain how these lessons are related to current military affairs or to lessons you have learned personally. Use a subparagraph for each.

5. Final Thought. Conclude your report with your final thoughts on the text. Provide an interesting ending to your report.

I. M. READER

ENCLOSURE (2)

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SAMPLE BOOK REVIEW

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Battery L, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines
3d Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force
Unit 36100 FPO AP 96602-6100

1560
IMR
16 Apr 93

From: Sergeant I. M. Reader, 123456789/0811 USMC
To: Senior Member, Division Book Review Board
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Battery L, 3d Battalion,
12th Marines
(2) Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 12th Marines
(3) Commanding Officer, 12th Marines

BOOK REVIEW OF PLATOON LEADER

(a) Platoon Leader by James McDonough

1. Recommendations

a. Audience. I recommend that every Marine leader read this book for its valuable lessons in leadership. I also recommend it for any others interested in combat leadership, small unit tactics in low-intensity conflict, or the memoirs of American soldiers in Vietnam.

b. Actions. I recommend that commanders use this book along with The Red Badge of Courage, All Quiet on the Western Front, and Company Commander, in Officer and Staff-Noncommissioned officer Professional Military Education classes.

2 Analysis of the Content

a. Thesis. To be a leader in combat is physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding. Success comes from a full dedication

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to the mission and a sincere regard for the welfare of the soldiers

b. Synopsis. After briefly tracing the events leading to his tour in Vietnam, McDonough describes arriving in country and joining his first unit. Then he recounts various challenges he faced as an infantry platoon leader. We see him grow from an inexperienced Lieutenant to an experienced combat leader. We also see the physical hardships and the emotional, social, and ethical dilemmas that complicate his job.

c. Key Characters

(1) 1stLt James McDonough. McDonough, the main character, is an extremely adept leader. His tactical skills grow quickly, and he wises to the moves and motives of his enemy, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. He also learns about his own troops, and quickly gains control of his platoon.

(2) Sgt John Hernandez. McDonough's first platoon sergeant is the only long-term professional NCO in the platoon. Close to retirement, he has a very cautious attitude and protects himself.

(3) Corporal John Killigan. A savvy, courageous, and maverick young enlisted man, Killigan has the dangerous assignment of point-man for patrols. As McDonough put it, "he was the best soldier among us."

d. Key Passages

(1 Page 152. McDonough's decision to protect Killigan.

(a) "The next morning I appointed Killigan the RTO. He had continuously disobeyed my ordered to stay off point.... Killigan was one of the few soldiers remaining since my arrival in August. I knew that the odds were heavily stacked against the point-man and Killigan had taken more than his share of risks. I would put him with me."

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(b) Analysis: While common sense says to keep the best man up front, McDonough handles it differently. He makes sure his subordinates know he's in charge of the platoon. He wants them also to know he'll look after their well-being, even if they don't appear concerned about themselves.

(2 Page 52. McDonough's thoughts on fear after getting wounded

(a) "Fear itself is not shameful. In fact, the absence of fear, in the face of combat, would be a suspicious abnormality of character. The challenge lies in not denying fear, but in being able to function in the face of it."

(b) Analysis: The author tries to deal directly with the most stressful of combat emotions--abject fear. He suggests a practical way of dealing with it: preparation and acceptance.

(3) Page 141. McDonough's dilemma over endangering soldiers

(a) "It was not a simple matter of kill or be killed. I had to think of my men. I could not let them be killed because of a rigid morality on my part. But if I compromised with that morality too often, I would become little more than a war criminal, unfit to lead those men. I had to struggle to keep a sense of balance."

(b) Analysis: McDonough wants to let his soldiers know he will do everything in his power to preserve their lives. But this is not easy since he often has to endanger the platoon to accomplish the mission.

3. Analysis of the Quality of the Book

a. Applicability. The book is excellent for young military leaders today. They can observe another officer joining a new unit, building credibility and authority, handling problems, and coping with fear.

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b. Timeliness. In this era of low-intensity conflict, McDonough's descriptions of small unit action are very timely for young combat officers. The lessons about leadership, morality, and ethics are timeless.

c. Completeness. McDonough appears to give a very thorough report of his experiences. He presents more than enough situations to support his central theme about the difficulties of combat leadership. The reader gets a fairly well-rounded view of the leadership challenges facing a combat officer.

d. Style. McDonough is a fine writer, whose narrative is very clear, direct, descriptive, and fast-paced. He handles them extremely well, building suspense and expressing emotion effectively. Occasionally, his prose turns analytical and philosophical when he comments on the boarder social or political dimensions of the conflict. For the most part, however, his book is straightforward description.

4. Lessons Learned

a. Be flexible. As the experiences of Lieutenant McDonough in Vietnam show over and over, a young leader will encounter situations he never expected, so he must have an open, alert mind and remain flexible. This idea of flexibility is not only very important in this book, but also in maneuver doctrine: Leaders must be flexible and show initiative.

b. Listen and learn, but make your own decisions. McDonough makes it clear that when facing a tough decision, a leader should listen to and learn from others but remember the final decision is his. This lesson tracks the NAVMC 2767, User's Guide to Marine Corps Leadership, which stresses the importance of active listening. This lesson also reinforces the principle of leadership responsibility, as discussed in NAVMC 2767.

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c. Learn from mistakes, but avoid repeated errors. The author seems to teach us that if young leaders make honest mistakes, they shouldn't condemn themselves, but, learn from their experiences and avoid repeated errors. This notion complements the Army's current climate of openness and tolerance for the legitimate mistakes of junior officers.

5. Final Thought. While Platoon Leader tells the story of one fighting man's role in an important, but painful chapter of American military history, its lessons are timeless. It's worth the attention of leaders at all levels.

I. M. READER

ENCLOSURE (3)